

# DERMASCOPE

The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics & Spa Therapy

July 2017



**Eyes & Equipment**

The Official Publication of Aesthetics  
International Association

# 10 THINGS ABOUT...

## Skin Cancer

by Michele Phelan

There is no doubt that ultraviolet rays emitted by the sun are mostly responsible for premature aging by causing degradation to collagen and elastin fibers in the skin, leading to elastosis and other skin disorders. Other skin conditions – like solar lentigo (sun spots) and solar keratosis (precursor to skin cancer) caused by DNA damage – can also be a result of ultraviolet damage. Besides premature aging and unsightly skin lesions, the most traumatic impact the sun can have on the skin is skin cancer. The good news is, in most cases, this trauma can be avoided.

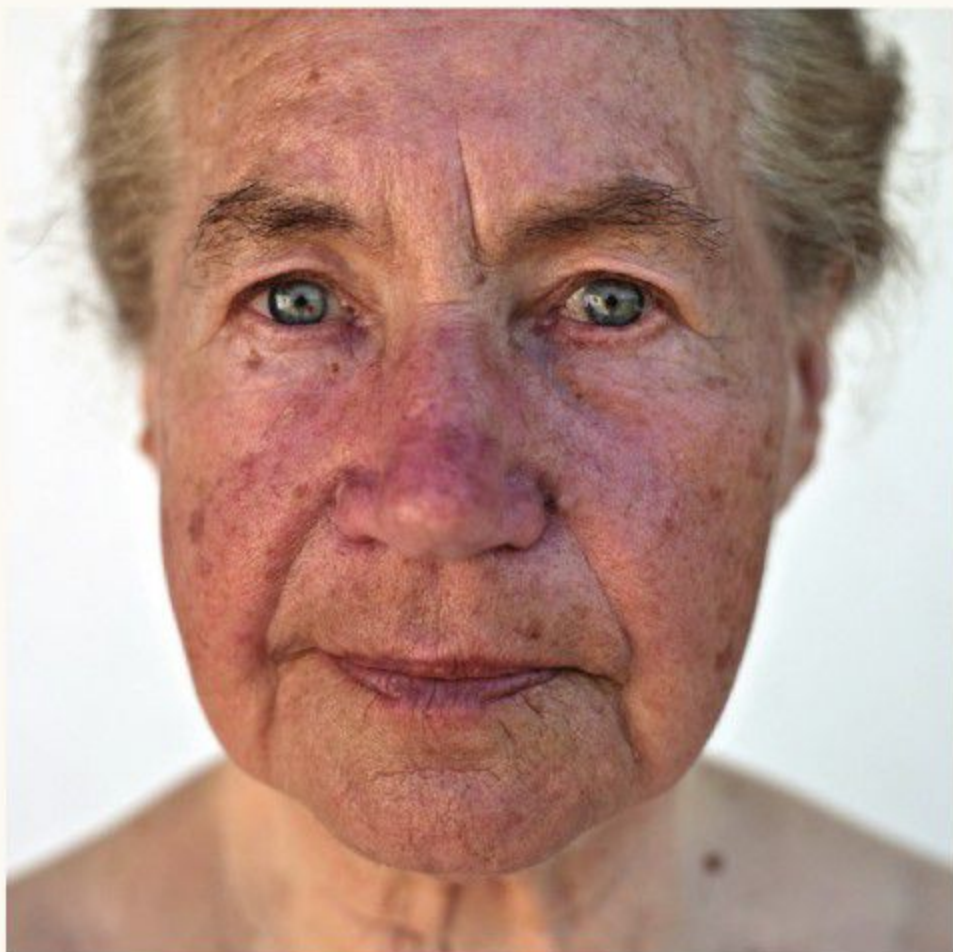


1 There are three main types of skin cancer: the least severe, basal cell carcinoma; squamous cell carcinoma; and the most severe, melanoma.

2 Research has proven that people who engage in years of direct, harsh sun exposure – especially individuals who are Fitzpatrick types I and II – are most susceptible to basal and squamous cell carcinoma because of their inability to express skin pigmentation for protection from the sun.



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**3** Individuals who are fair skinned, elderly, who have not worn sun protection consistently, who have been exposed to high levels of ultraviolet radiation for many years, and who have a genetic predisposition are at greatest risk for most skin cancers.

**4** Melanoma is found in all Fitzpatrick skin types, even the darker skin types, and also on areas that are not exposed to sunlight. This sheds doubt on whether or not the sun is solely responsible for triggering it. Scientists hypothesize several severe sunburns rather than ongoing sun exposure may be a contributing factor, as well as genetic predisposition.

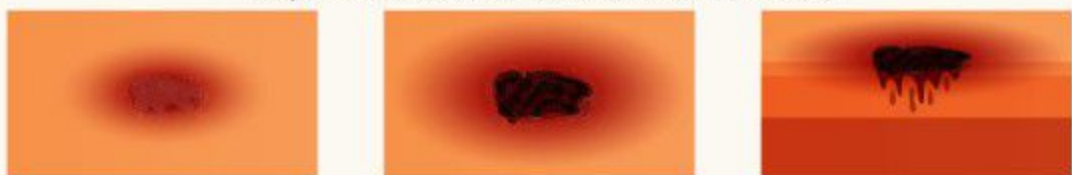


## CANCER OF THE SKIN

### BASAL CELL CARCINOMA



### SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA OF THE SKIN

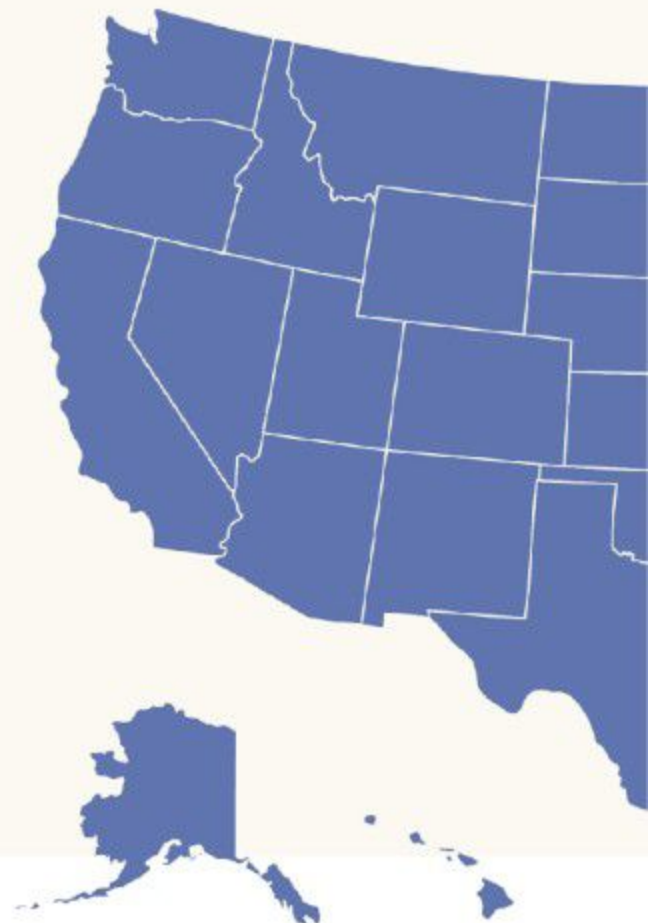


### MELANOMA



**5** All three types of skin cancer begin in the basal cell zone. Basal cell carcinoma normally does not metastasize, but can cause some local skin damage if it is not removed. Squamous cell carcinoma, if caught early enough, can be effectively treated and spreads very slowly. Melanoma, which is the most dangerous of the three, can metastasize if it is not caught early, and, in rare cases, can cause death.

**6** Using a broad spectrum sunscreen can help protect against sunburns, premature aging, and skin cancer and should be used daily. For Fitzpatrick skin types I, II, and III, a higher numbered SPF is recommended.

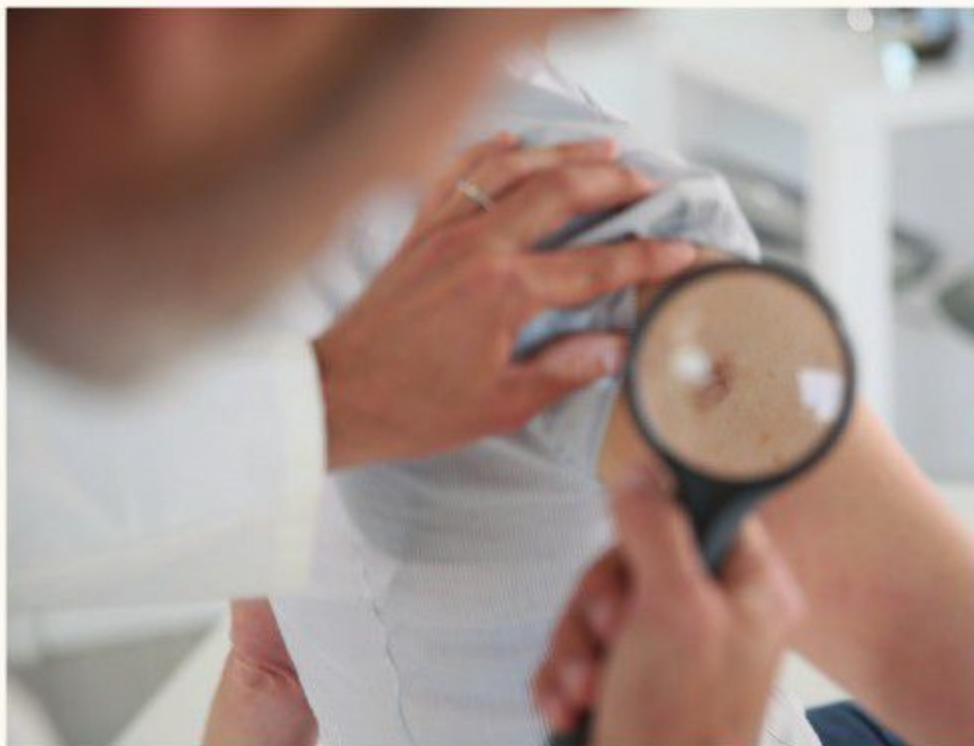


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# 7

In the United States, the highest number of skin cancer cases is in Utah, Delaware, Vermont, Minnesota, and Idaho. According to the CDC, these are not the states with the greatest amount of sunshine. However, people who live in these states receive intermittent amounts of sun and their skin may not be acclimated to receiving ultraviolet radiation as well as those who live in states where the sun is stronger most of the year.



# 8

Skin cancer is, in most cases, avoidable or at least treatable if one adheres to the following: wear sunscreen daily, whether it is sunny or cloudy and re-apply as necessary; do not use a tanning bed or bask in the sun, especially when the sun is at its strongest between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.; use a moisturizer that contains antioxidants to help battle against free radical damage; have the skin examined yearly from head to toe, especially for those with fairer skin. For those who have been diagnosed with skin cancer in the past, more frequent skin exams by a doctor may be in order. Do not wait to have suspicious skin lesions checked out by a doctor. Know all family history for skin cancer.



# 9

Lesions on the skin that appear and do not resolve by themselves in several weeks should be checked by a doctor, preferably by a dermatologist. Darker lesions that appear and are raised, misshapen, multi-colored, uncomfortable, bleed, or any variation of the aforementioned should be referred to a dermatologist without delay to be diagnosed.



Skin care professionals play an amazing role in the beauty and the health of their clients' skin. They are often in the best position to help protect their clients' skin by recognizing the early signs of skin cancer and pre-skin cancers and encouraging clients to seek physician evaluations immediately. Skin cancer is a scary prospect that affects millions yearly. The best protection against it is education and diligent monitoring of the skin, not to mention wearing an appropriate sunscreen daily.



*Michele Phelan has been a licensed, practicing aesthetician for over 20 years. She has taught state board, CIDESCO, and post-graduate aesthetics. She has extensive knowledge of dermatological topics, cosmetic chemistry, electrical modalities, and physiology/anatomy. Phelan is an International CIDESCO diplomat, and a registered aromatherapist. Her articles have been featured in many industry publications. She has been interviewed by CBS for her extensive knowledge of eyelash extensions. She is the co-owner of Concepts Skin Care Clinic in San Francisco and the founder and president of Concepts Institute of Advanced Esthetics located in San Francisco. Concepts Institute is an approved NCEA training facility. [conceptsinstitute.com](http://conceptsinstitute.com)*

# 10

If skin cancer is detected and treated early, all types are curable, especially basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma. For this reason, if a skin lesion looks or feels suspicious, it should be checked by a dermatologist as soon as possible.

